THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

of

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

presents

EXPLORATIONS

Sunday, November 18, 1973, at 8:00 p.m.

Convocation Hall, Arts Building

EPISODES for tape recorder ..... Violet Archer

SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO ..... Violet Archer

Allegro ma non troppo
Largo sostenuto ed espressivo
Allegretto scherzoso

Lawrence Fisher, violin
Helmut Brauss, piano

MUSIC FOR MOUTHS, MARIMBA,
MBIRA AND ROTO-TOMS ..... Malcolm Forsyth

Munye Icula
Iculabili
Iculathathu

Allan Scott, percussion
The University of Alberta Concert Choir
Conducted by Larry Cook

INTERMISSION

PIANO SONATA No. 6 IN A, OPUS 20 (1955) ..... Manus Sasonkin

Allegro amabile
Adagio sostenuto, un poco mesto
Presto ma non assai
Rondo: Allegro moderato—Epilogue: Andantino teneramente

Jack Hurt, piano

RESURRECTIONS ..... Claude Kenneson
(first performance)

Andrea Mellis, mezzo-soprano
Gérard Guénette, narrator
Cheryll Melott, solo cellist

The University of Alberta Cello Ensemble
Claude Kenneson, Director

Next concert in this series: Sunday, January 13, 1974, at 8:00 p.m. - The program includes Barber's Dover Beach, Vaughan Williams' On Wenlock Edge, and Brahms' Piano Quartet in C Minor, Opus 60.

PROGRAM NOTES

Episodes, an electronic music composition, was composed in April 1973, in the studio of Goldsmith College in London, England during the composer's sabbatical year. The work consists of contrasting sections joined by a refrain which is disguised after its first hearing. In the course of the piece, two of the sections are separated by silence for dynamic effect.

This composition was conceived on two Putney Synthesizers. Basically, noise and three oscillators are used, and are put through various treatments. Although Episodes is recorded on one track, the effect is, at times, that of two sound tracks.

* * * *

Sonata for Violin and Piano was composed in the summer of 1956 while Violet Archer was on a Resident Fellowship at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. The Colony was founded early in this century at his summer home by the American composer Edward MacDowell, and has become a centre of interest to artists working in varied fields.

The Sonata was inspired by the peaceful yet stimulating surroundings of the Colony. It is in three movements: Allegro ma non troppo; Largo sostenuto ed espressivo; Allegretto scherzoso. The first movement reflects a mood of contentment, while the second and third are respectively serene and playful.

* * * *

Music for Mouths, Marimba, Mbira and Roto-toms is a set of three pieces written between December 1972, and February 1973. It attempts to explore some of the acoustic possibilities of the human voice in consort, combined with the use of three percussion instruments. Though there is no text, the phonic sounds of the Zulu language are extensively employed, and the percussion instruments are all close relatives of African instruments.

The Zulu tongue is characterized by colourful vowell sounds and very percussive consonants (both explosive and implosive; the latter type having no equivalent in European languages at all). These "clicks" were said to have been adopted into the Bantu languages from the Bushman tongue of the Kalahari people. In this work these sounds are used as a complement to the sounds of the percussion instruments, as they are in fact used in much African folk music which inspired the creation of this work. The composer spent his entire childhood in the Zulu country of South Africa.

Munye icula: Here the voices intone vowell colours on middle C and consonants on the two perfect fifths, G-D and Ab-Eb, to the accompaniment of the marimba, which they attempt to imitate, and which has an improvised cadenza at one point.

Iculabili: A quasi-fugue for the voices using glissando starts this piece, which is almost strictly "forwards to the middle, backwards to the end" in structure. Dominant seventh sonorities are juxtaposed, accompanied all the while by a single tremolo chord on the marimba. The mbira (or African thumb-piano) sounds the final chord.

Iculathathu: Extensive use of whispering sounds characterizes this movement. Generally, this is the percussionist's piece and the choir accompanies. The roto-toms (or set of four tunable tom-toms) emerge here in solo role, alternating with marimba, and the piece ends with an improvised solo for mbira with whispered accompaniment in the choir.

* * * *

Piano Sonata No. 6 in A was composed during the first two months of 1955. Its outlook is conservative, its mood somewhat pensive, its tone lyric. It consists of four movements which are, no doubt, thematically inter-related; but this fact, in itself, is totally unimportant, because, in this sonata, structure, form, artifact—in short, the entire panoply of compositional means—have all been subordinated in favour of expressive ends.

The first movement is dominated by its opening theme, which is presented initially in cool, quiet octaves, but which acquires warmth as it gathers momentum. Several other themes are generated by this momentum: a tranquil phrase which begins with a series of two-note sighs; a long, singing line spun over gossamer figuration; and a more impassioned presentation of the sighing phrase. The second movement is darker in hue; its elegaic flavour is sometimes restrained, sometimes overtly tragic, but it is never relieved. The third movement occupies the position of a scherzo, but the joke is more ironic than mirthful, and even the boisterous middle section is sardonic rather than good-humoured. With the finale comes a return to equanimity; the rondo wears a playful air, and its digressions are in the spirit of badinage. At the end is a reverie of infinite tenderness; a recollection, barely perceived; silence.

* * * *

Since the mid-eighteenth century, cellists have been engaged in playing cello ensemble music which utilizes the combined sonority of several celli and exploits the multi-faceted tonal possibilities of such combinations. Inspired by the artistry of Pablo Casals, Emmanuel Moór composed his Suite, Opus 95 in 1909, and this marked the beginning of a new epoch in the composition of cello ensemble music during which composers began to recognize the cello ensemble as an ideal vehicle for the performance of chamber music. Very often the voice has been used in combination with the cello ensemble although there exist innumerable works for the ensemble unassisted by voices or other instruments. Several Canadian composers including Jean Coulthard, R. Murray Schaefer, and Harry Freedman have added significant works to this repertoire.

Resurrections for Soprano, Narrator, Solo Cellist and Cello Ensemble is based on a text drawn from writings which concern three different saints: Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena and Joan of Arc. Each saint, in her own way, has articulated some definite feeling about the mystic experience of immortality as it is understood in Christian teachings. The composer began this work last summer in England and completed it in Edmonton for the University of Alberta Cello Ensemble composed of Peter Rudolfi, Barbara Cox, Barbara Morris, Joanne Ludbrook, Diana Nuttall, Barbara Fraser, Paul Domby and Frantisek Cikanek. The impetus for the work was the reading of a passage from Acts XVII, 27, 28:

"He is not far from every one of us: for in
Him we live, and move, and have our being."